



CASE HISTORY OVERVIEW

Providing business solutions for the selection and implementation of packaged software and e-business solutions.

"The Right Team is appropriately named." – Jeff Kovacs, Vice President, Human Resources, National City Corporation

THE CHALLENGE:

To outsource and automate the administration of a leading financial holding company's annual benefits enrollment to a new vendor and ensure compatibility with its internal PeopleSoft HRMS System. To ensure flawless service delivery, testing efforts were expanded, and it was determined the conversion team needed additional horsepower to meet its delivery date.

THE SOLUTION:

Retain the project and technical management expertise of Right Team, a professional services team specializing in the selection and implementation of packaged software, and the implementation of e-business solutions and human resource systems.

THE RESULTS:

Data conversion was successful and the flexible benefits system was fully implemented on March 1, 2001, with annual enrollment, and ongoing event maintenance functionality.

Based on 2,500 returned employee surveys, last year's annual enrollment satisfaction survey indicated a high overall satisfaction rating. The Cleveland-based company anticipates this to escalate this year with improved functionality and new feature sets.

A CASE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In 1999, National City Corporation delivered its most successful annual benefits enrollment to date. Despite this success, Human Resources Vice President Jeff Kovacs and his department continued to look for opportunities to improve.

After identifying a combination of better services, cost and quality, in January 2000, Kovacs began assembling his 20-person, cross-functional core team to kick off the migration of its external benefits administration support services to Hewitt Associates LLC and to develop an online enrollment option. Given the magnitude of the project, and the critical nature of ensuring an accurate data conversion of its 31,000 employees, the "Flex" core team needed to flawlessly implement the flexible benefits system for the 2001 plan year. The benefits enrollment project is one of the largest annual undertakings the human resources department performs.

The flexible benefits plan provides employees with the opportunity to select benefits based on their individual needs. Given "credits," full-time employees use them to select medical, dental, life insurance, disability and other benefit options. Also known as cafeteria plans, the expanded flexible benefits plan also enables employees to buy or sell an extra week of vacation. Accessed via the Internet or the telephone, the expanded flexible benefits enrollment system has been well received by employees.

"With a new project manager on the team due to the reassignment of the project's senior manager, and project time constraints, we brought in the Right Team to help us with project management, testing, and to assist our systems support group," says Kovacs.



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"I was very impressed with Right Team's leadership and technical capabilities. The four person team was very quick in assessing our situation and helping to identify warning signs, they thoroughly prepared us to avoid them," explains Kovacs.

The project, known as Flex21, required a considerable amount of testing given the partnership with a new vendor. Data transfer from National City to Hewitt, and more importantly, how the data came back into National City's PeopleSoft system, were critical to the project's success. This required countless hours of programming and testing to ensure a smooth implementation.

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Mei-Lan Cheng, National City's Flex project manager, also was pleased with the team's progress. Nicknaming Right Team's Brenda Leisinger, "911", Cheng was never disappointed when she placed a call for assistance. "Brenda knows how to get to the root of the problem very quickly, and was very patient in working through this project's many issues." Adds Cheng, "I was equally impressed with Gwen Braverman, Right Team's lead technical and testing manager on the project. Gwen understands the complexity of technical issues and knows how to communicate so everyone can understand them. She was the driver behind our technical and testing efforts."

"I can't thank them enough. They were excellent team players and provided a great deal of leadership to our team. From a personal perspective, I've gained new project management techniques that will be used indefinitely going forward."

Kovacs notes, "I never had a sense they were consultants, they were just an integral part of our team. There were times when the conversion was quite challenging, but they hung in there and just worked through it with us."

THE LAUNCH

National City successfully launched its new flexible benefits enrollment system on November 7, 2000. Employees continue to find the Internet a convenient way to access their personal benefits information and National City is pleased that Hewitt recently announced plans to take its web site to even higher levels of performance.

"While our employees indicated a high level of satisfaction with the flexible benefits system on the Internet in our annual enrollment satisfaction survey, we anticipate that score to climb even higher as we roll out additional levels of functionality and convenience," adds Kovacs. "It's exciting to be able to offer our employees leading edge products and services via the Internet."

In an effort to have an ongoing flexible benefit enrollment system that readily accommodates new hires and those that experience qualified status (life) changes including marriage, a new baby, etc., the Flex core team and the Right Team worked to make that happen after the annual open enrollment period was completed.

With hundreds of monthly benefits enrollments, National City wanted to streamline the ability to sign up for benefits. "Initially, employees needed to complete paper forms. By automating the system as of March 1, 2001, employees now have access to the full benefits package as soon as they are eligible," Kovacs added.

While the migration of National City's flexible benefits enrollment system was successful, the Flex core team is not resting on its laurels. They will continue to focus on delivering flawless and enhanced HR services to all National City employees.